

TODAY is the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the British Antiquarian Booksellers' Association. The A.B.A. are commemorating the occasion, not with sonorous self-congratulation or the unveiling of plaques, but with the announcement of an all-out crusade against the "rings" at book auctions.

Not only will any A.B.A. member having connection with the "ring" be expelled, but a standing committee of vigilantes has been set up to investigate complaints and hound out the miscreants.

Mr. Percy Muir, of Eiklin Mathews, a former President



PERCY MUIR

of the A.B.A. and of the International A.B.A., has been the chief crusader. It is largely thanks to his efforts and to those of this year's President, Mr. Peter Murray Hill, that virtually the whole force of the A.B.A. has been mobilised against this fringe of the trade.

Other Rings

The A.B.A. is not leaving the matter there. This week, 150 of the world's leading Antiquarian Booksellers meet here for their Tenth International Congress, and their British hosts are going to press for all countries to join in destroying the "ring."

So far so good, and it is to the great credit of the British booksellers that they are the first in the antique trade to put their house in order. But what about the much fatter "rings" that operate at the auctions of

antique furniture, pictures and silver? What do the Auctioneers, the Antique Dealers' Association and the Fine Art Trade Guild intend to do now that the A.B.A. has shown the way?

All these bodies are fully alive to the darker side of the picture. The names of the "ringers" are known to them. What are they waiting for?

"... Atque Morari..."

IN the old days when there were few cars about and only a handful of A.A. and R.A.C. patrols, there was some point in receiving and returning a salute, particularly as the absence of a salute has sometimes unofficially meant that the police were working a speed-trap ahead.

Today the hand of the road patrol is unceasingly at his cap, and the meaningless gesture only adds to the constant hand-wagging which is such an egregious feature of English driving.

My sympathy goes out to the 3,000-odd A.A. and R.A.C. patrol-men, faced every day with the potential task of saluting some three million Club members, and I wonder what they feel about the waste of energy involved.

I also wonder how much the one-handed driving required by these hollow courtesies contributed last year to the 10,872 road accidents due "to inattentiveness or to the driver's attention being diverted."

The Late Dr. Kinsey

THERE is not a grain of truth in the story that Dr. Kinsey was working on a book dealing with the sex life of British women. Nor, according to his colleague, Dr. Pomeroy, who will carry on his work, had he even contemplated one.

At the time of his death he

had four books on the stocks and these will, in due course, be published by the Kinsey Institute. One deals with animals and another with sex in prisons. The subjects of the other two are being kept secret.

American obituary notators of Dr. Kinsey have been laudatory and are unanimous that he was first, last and always a scientist and that he deeply resented the newspaper exploitation of his work.

"Sexual Behaviour in the

Human Male" sold 500,000 copies in America at over £2 a copy. The goggle-eyed purchasers were so bored with the complicated graphs and abstract tables that the sequel on women was a comparative failure.

The Smashes Hit

"MY FAIR LADY," the American musical based on Bernard Shaw's "Pygmalion," is being hailed as the greatest Broadway success of the century. No seats are available,

except at around £10 a piece in the grey market; until April, and a five-year run, is prophesied.

Yet the story of the Cockney girl being turned into a "lady" is English and set in England. The stars, Julie Andrews, Rex Harrison and Stanley Holloway, are English, and the clothes were designed by Cecil Beaton. Finally, there is not a word of "American" in the whole production.

Last week, at Dallas, Texas, Mr. Beaton received America's

highest fashion award for his work on "My Fair Lady." This is the annual Nieman Marcus "Oscar" for the designer who has had the greatest influence on contemporary fashion. Beaton's clothes for "My Fair Lady" have apparently won not only this year's American dress shows but also, according to the judges, the latest Paris fashions.

Rich "Uncle"

Beaton owns an infinitesimal "piece" of the play. The "uncle" is Mr. William Paley, President of Columbia Broadcasting, who was so struck with Alan Lerner's book and lyrics that he agreed to finance the production out of his own pocket—a decision which may make him the richest "uncle" in the history of the theatre.

"My Fair Voltaire"

AND now Voltair is being set to music. Tyrone Guthrie tells me that he will start rehearsing "Candide and His Friends" as soon as he returns to America, and that he is plucking Max Adrian from the British stage to take the part of Pangloss.

This improbable venture was first nourished by Lillian Hellman, of "The Little Foxes," and Leonard Bernstein, who combines a taste for jazz with his role as Serge Koussevitzky's prize protégé. They have finished the music and the book, and enrolled Guthrie as producer.

Today "opera" in any form is thought to create box-office resistance, but I gather from Tyrone Guthrie that "Candide and His Friends" will fit the latest art-form—a musical with music.

Early Birds

DID Captain Scott take the right food on his expedition to the South Pole? While Sir Raymond Priestley was raising this question, at the British Association, I was eating a cake made with Bird's baking-powder that Scott took to the Antarctic in 1910.

A tin of this was found in an open crate outside Scott's Cape Evans hut by a recent American expedition. It was sent back to Alfred Bird & Sons by way of the Scott Polar Research Institute. The company's cooks baked a cake with the contents and sent it to me, and all I can say is that you can undoubtedly hoard Bird's baking-powder for forty-six years if you want to.

Prisoner of Words

THE Literary Editor of a newspaper such as this has no time to write himself. He

spends his days marrying books to reviewers, sub-editing mistakes—and occasionally libels—and, from morning until midnight, chain-reading.

The creative frustrations of Leonard Russell, who has been Literary Editor of *The Sunday Times* for twelve years, showed themselves first by his production of "The Saturday Book," that Christmas stocking into which we have all at one time dipped. He is now launching



LEONARD RUSSELL

out into a second venture—"The Russell Reader"—to be published this month by Cassell.

Add.

Omnibus editions have taken America by storm, but "The Russell Reader" will see all other omnibuses on to the remainder shelf. It contains six complete novels—three "musts" and three "discoveries"—illustrated in line and colour by six of England's leading draughtsmen. It is luxuriously printed and produced and will cost 25s.

The books were personally chosen by Leonard Russell, and each is prefaced by his own highly perceptive introduction. The titles are: "Flush: A Biography" by Virginia Woolf; "Madame de..." by Louise de Vilmorin; "The Borrowers" by Mary Norton; "The Second Curtain" by Roy Fuller; "Scott-King's Modern Europe" by Evelyn Waugh and "Lucky Jim" by Kingsley Amls.

This will be the most good reading, in the finest dress, for the least money, this Christmas

"Not Me, Sir"

THE *Sunday Times* representative in New York stopped to observe a commotion on the sidewalk of Times Square.

One of the crowd, hustled by a cop, waited this memorable wait of the innocent bystander "Don't pick on me, I'm just people."